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A
SUMMARY
OF THE
EVIDENCE

PRODUCED BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL,
AND BEFORE A
COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS;
RELATING TO THE
SLAVE TRADE.

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A SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE, &c.

THE whole of that quarter of the Globe called Africa, from which the Negroes are now carried to the West Indies, is of great extent, and very populous, and supposed to contain between 50 and 70 millions of people; the northern parts of this Country were full of rich populous cities, the Inhabitants whereof were learned and polished 1500 years before these parts of Europe were known to the rest of the world, and sunk in ignorance and barbarism. In that early period of the history of Mankind, and ever since, the Inhabitants of those Countries have had a commerce and communication with the interior parts of Africa; yet so far has such intercourse been from civilizing the Inhabitants, they are degenerated, and become almost Savages themselves; so that from that Country called Barbary, savage people are called Barbarians.

The Inhabitants of Africa, from the Tropic of Cancer to the Cape of Good Hope, a tract of 4000 miles from North to South, are in the same uncivilized state which they were in upwards of 3000 years ago, except on the sea-coast, where their intercourse with the Europeans, who have carried on that traffic, which is now the subject of discussion, has softened their manners. In every other part of the Country they are still without religion, learning, arts, or any regular or settled government.

We have not any very ancient histories of this Country—we learn however that BENJAMIN de TUBELA about 600.

years ago speaks of a part of Africa called Asvan, where the Abyssinians used to throw bread, rice, dried raisins, and figs, in large quantities among the *half-famished Blacks*, whom, while they scrambled for them like dogs, they seized and carried away Prisoners and sold them in Egypt, and other Countries; these, says de TUDELA, are the Negroes or Black Slaves, the posterity of HAM—how far their continuing in their present uncivilized state for so many thousand years may be imputed to the curse of NOAH, on the posterity of CANAAN we presume not to determine.

Heretofore many thousand of Black Slaves were sold in Egypt, from whence they were sent all over India, and other parts of the East, to Mahometans: it appears also that a great many of these people were made *eunuchs*, to attend the Seraglios of the *Mahometan Princes*. As the *Mahometans* did not trade far down the Coast on the West side of Africa, the Inhabitants of those parts were scarcely known till after the discovery of the Passage round the Cape of Good Hope, by the Portuguese, who then found the Inhabitants were continually at war with each other; they murder'd all their Prisoners, till they found they could sell them to the Europeans, who, by purchasing them, saved millions of lives.

So late as fourscore years ago it was the custom of a savage Nation, called Gallas or Jagas, to cause all their children to be buried alive as soon as born, and they supplied their places by captives of 12 and 13 years of age, the males they bred up for war, and kept the females for procreation. The unhappy remains of the captives of both sexes were sacrificed to their idols, or killed and eaten—not in time of scarcity of cattle or other provisions, but in preference to all other flesh—so say the Authors of the Universal Modern History in their history of Africa.

Our countryman, SHELGRAVE, who was at Whidaw, and

obliged to attend the king of Dahomey, when he attacked and conquered those people, tells us that on his arrival at the gate of the king's camp, he saw the heads of 4000 of the people of Whidaw, who had been sacrificed to the God of the Conquerors about three Weeks before. He next mentions " eight hundred prisoners brought in from a neighbouring Nation called Tuffo, great part of whom the king set aside to sacrifice to his Idol, the remainder he would have sacrificed also, had not the Englishmen bought them."

The soldiers were paid for them in shells called Cowries, at the rate of 20 Shillings for a man, and 10 Shillings for a woman, boy, or girl. Some thousands of dead people's heads were brought into the Court, hanging on strings, for which the officers, as they received them, gave the soldiers at the rate of five shillings each.

BULLFINCH LAMB, in his letter to Governor TINKER, dated 27th Nov, 1724, says of this Prince " he has already set his two chief Palaces round with the skulls of dead men which he killed in war, as thick as they can lie on the walls one by another, each of which palaces are in circumference larger than St. James's Park." Captain SMITH, who was there also tells us, that when he walked out, there was scarce any stirring for bodies without heads; and had it *rained blood*, it could not have laid thicker on the ground.

This was the miserable situation of the people before the Europeans purchased them; they were always at war, and killed and eat one another by thousands; since that time the same Authors tell us that these barbarous customs have been much left off by the people who trade with the Europeans. SNELGRAVE says, that the people on the sea-coast abhorred such cruelty, and particularly the people of Whidaw were so civilized by commerce, that it was a pleasure to deal with them. These butcheries and sacrifices to their Gods do not,

however, appear to be entirely left off, except in those parts where they trade with the Europeans, and even there if the Trade is put a stop to, there is no doubt but they would be renewed.

So that this superior state of civilization is owing intirely to the *Slave Trade*, which ignorant or designing people want to *abolish*. For this purpose, they have published the most infamous falsehoods, pretending that the persons transported from Africa to the West Indies, are kidnapped or taken prisoners in wars excited by the Europeans, solely for the purpose of selling them to the traders; that they are barbarously treated in the passage between Africa and America, and inhumanly used after their arrival there.

In order to impose on the good people of this country, they have published a *false account* of the Evidence produced before the Committee of the House of Commons, suppressing all the Evidence of Lord Rodney and the other British Admirals and Generals, who have been in Africa and the West Indies, and his Majesty's Governors in those parts of the world, a small part of whose Evidence, it is thought proper to publish, that the truth may be known.

JOHN BARNES, Esquire, Governor of Senegal, and THOMAS PAPLET, Esquire, an Officer in the African Corps; testify that justice is fairly administered in that and the neighbouring countries; and that *no wars are made for the purpose of making Slaves*; that if any Prince was to enter into such war, he would draw the forces of all the neighbouring States upon himself; that what is called kidnapping, is *impossible*, they prove that what they call wars, or breaking of villages, are modes of executing the law against those who will not pay their taxes, when these taxes or duties are due. Notice is given to the inhabitants, that if they are not paid by a certain day, their persons will be seized to compel the payment,

and the king sends out his soldiers, as soldiers are sent after smugglers in this country, to arrest the people, who are released on payment of what is due; if they do not pay, as many of them are sold for Slaves, as will be sufficient to raise the money; which, perhaps, some people may consider, is as humane treatment, as the perpetual imprisonment of such debtors, by the laws of Great Britain. These facts are also proved by Governor WILKES, Mr. GANDY, Captain HEATLY, Mr. PENNY, Lieutenant MATHEWS, Mr. NORRIS, Mr. DALZEL, Governor MILES, who also prove, that the Natives murder the greatest part of those whom the Europeans refuse to buy. Admiral EDWARDS, gives Evidence to the same purport. Most of the before-mentioned gentlemen speak the language of the country, and have lived many years in Africa; from their testimony it is easy to reconcile the apparent contradiction between these accounts, and that of those witnesses, who speak of the Negroes going to war to obtain Slaves, and kidnapping Negroes, as common practices. For it plainly appears, by comparing the Accounts of all the people who have given Evidence upon this subject, that the Officers of the Negro Princes, go out to enforce the Law, and recover their taxes; they go *armed* to prevent *resistance*, they go *in the night*, to prevent the debtors seeing them and getting away, they seize or arrest their servants or children if they meet them on the road.

These circumstances, make the sailors and people who have their information from them, conclude these proceedings, which are only acts of Public Justice, according to the mode of executing the Law in that Country, to be war or pillage, they call these expeditions wars, and the taking up the Negroes, kidnapping, and it is by no means improbable, that the Natives adopt these English words, as expressive of others that have a very different meaning; e. g. the word *palavers*,

a corruption of the Portuguese or Spanish palabras, a word or discourse, is used all over the west coast of Africa, by the natives and European sailors, to signify any treaty, or agreement, a law suit, a criminal prosecution, &c. Thus, sending the Officers of Justice of that Country to collect the taxes, has, among the English Sailors, got the name of *War*; and ~~arresting~~ one of the inhabitants, is called by the sailors, kidnapping. But all the histories of Africa for these last two hundred years, prove, not only, that no wars are entered into for the purpose of obtaining slaves, but that whenever there is War, no trade can be carried on. The Evidence of Captain PENNY, Captain FRAZER, Lieutenant DALZEL, — NORRIS, Esq. are full to that point, and THOMAS ANDERSON, Esq. particularly testifies, that on account of a war in the Country, which lasted from 1762 to 1764, a Bristol ship was obliged to lay two years before she could get a cargo of Slaves. If from the Testimony of such respectable witnesses, men in such stations of life, as would render them despicable to their neighbours and acquaintance if they were known to advance a falsity, it is clear, that no Wars or Kidnapping are the means of making Slaves; and the above explanation of the words, as being the sense in which they are used, reconciles the apparent difference of the Accounts given by gentlemen, who, not understanding the language of the country, have relied on the Accounts given by the Traders. As to the declarations of common sailors and other low people, who have been picked up and tutored, for the purpose of giving Evidence, or whose information has been drawn up for them by others, they are not only subject to the same objection of not understanding the Language, nor the meaning of the words used by the Natives, but they are, for the most part, so inconsistent and absurd, as to be totally unworthy of credit.

The next charge of ill-treatment on the Traders, is with regard to the want of Accommodation of the Negroes on board the ships, in their passage to the West Indies, but as the success of the voyage, depends on their safety and health, common sense will lead us to conclude, that the best possible care is taken by the captains of the ships in that respect; accordingly we find, by undoubted Evidence, that the space allowed for a full-grown Negroe to lie in, is a breadth of 16 inches, whereas that of a *sailor* on board a man of war, is but 14, that the Negroes in Africa sleep upon the ground, and therefore sleeping on the deck is no hardship, that exclusive of the small space the *sailors* have to lie in, they are incumbered with their hammocks and clothes, consequently, when *troops* are carried on board men of war, with their clothes and accoutrements, they are not so well accommodated in four times the space allowed to a Negroe, who has neither chest, arms, nor accoutrements, bedding, or clothes, which they never want in their own country.

Although it is certain, when the small-pox, scurvy, flux, or any putrid or contagious disorders, get among a ship's crew, or the troops or Negroes carried in the vessel, the distress of the people on board must be very great, yet it must be much more so in a ship crowded with troops, whose hammocks and bedding cannot be cleansed from the filth which they must inevitably contract, so easily as the decks and platforms on which the Negroes sleep, which are daily washed with vinegar, and cleansed and fumigated with brimstone and tobacco; accordingly when these diseases get on board men of war or transport vessels on long voyages, the mischief is greater than on board Slave Ships.

But Parliament has thought proper to make regulations in that respect, and to direct fewer Negroes shall be carried in the same sized vessel than heretofore; it remains to be



proved whether such regulations will be advantageous: if they should be found so, every person in the trade will be equally benefited and satisfied. Should one life in a hundred be saved by those, the Planters will, with great satisfaction, pay the advanced price which it will be necessary to pay for those brought over, whose freight must be proportionably advanced; and doubtless the people who talk so much of their humanity, will readily pay a higher price for the sugar made by the Negroes, which must certainly cost more than before in making.

We come now to a more agreeable part of the task we set ourselves, in the examination of the Evidence before the Lords of the Privy Council and the Select Committee of the House of Commons, *viz.* the Situation and Treatment of the Negroes in the West Indies. It was not possible to hope for so great a number of disinterested Evidences in the former parts of the subject under examination, because Africa is seldom or ever visited from motives of health, pleasure, or curiosity. Those who are sent there on duty, except the Governors of the Forts or Settlements, seldom stay long, or have any knowledge of the language: but the case is far otherwise with respect to the West Indies. The number of disinterested gentlemen, of high rank, who have resided there for many years, enables us to give the most incontestible proofs of the happiness of the Negroes in that part of the World,

To say nothing of the Testimony given by the Gentlemen of the fairest reputation, men of rank and fortune, who are Planters themselves, and who therefore may be considered in some measure biassed. Lord RODNEY testifies, "That he has been acquainted with the different parts of the West Indies ever since the year 1761, and he never saw any but humane treatment towards the Negroes there.—"

“ He never saw any instance of cruelty ; but, on the contrary, great forbearance. The punishments inflicted were not too severe. That, in Jamaica, he has seen 5000 or 6000 Negroes going to market, on a Saturday evening, with the produce of their own grounds, such as Fruit and *Garden stuff*, *Poultry* and *Pigs* of their own breeding, which they sell for their own profit. With respect to lodging, they are in general better off than the poor in this country ; they never appear to be over-worked, and do considerable less work than the labouring men in England ; that they work from sun-rise to sun-set, (that is, from about six o'clock in the morning to six in the evening ; the sun never rising or setting much earlier or later in those countries) : that they have about an hour allowed them for breakfast, and two hours for dinner ; that he has often wished the poor in this country were in so happy a condition ; that they have all the appearance of happiness and vivacity, and generally dance in the evening after their work is ended.”

“ Admiral Sir PETER PARKER never heard of any acts of cruelty for four or five years, when he commanded in the West Indies ; that, in the houses he visited, the Negroes were treated with the greatest humanity and attention, and particularly when they were sick. He has been at many plantations in Jamaica, and found the slaves well clothed : some remarkably neat and clean. The women particularly pique themselves on being so. The slaves are well fed by their masters, and besides have plantations of their own. Those that are industrious grow rich, and enjoy themselves very much ; their lodging more comfortable than *our cottages*. He does not know any of our labouring poor *so well lodged*. They appear happy and satisfied ; they not only sing and dance after their work, but you may hear them sing in the

field while they are at work ; and that they enjoy themselves a great deal more than the White People in the West Indies."

" Admiral BARRINGTON agrees in every point with Lord RODNEY and Sir PETER PARKER ; and Admiral BARRINGTON says, that when he was stationed at Barbadoes last war, he went ashore almost every day for three months, and most frequently visited the Plantations which lay near the shore, and never saw an act of cruelty exercised upon the Negroes, not a *single stroke* given them, except in one instance, which, upon inquiry, he found to be a husband beating his wife with a whip, because she had been a whoring all the preceding night. That their huts were infinitely superior to the Irish cabins, much cleaner and neater. That the Negroes are not over-worked in any respect, and if you compare their work with that of a Sailor belonging to a merchant ship in loading and unloading, the latter will be found to do as much work in a day, as the former in a week. That the slaves appear to be much happier than the labouring poor of Ireland, and many parts of Great Britain."

" Sir JOSHUA ROWLEY was stationed three or four years in Jamaica, and he never saw any cruelty used, but the Negroes treated with the greatest attention : that the Negroes on the Plantations were always properly clothed, and much better fed than the labourers in England : that they have all small cottages of their own, which are kept very clean and neat."

" Admiral HOTHAM has been five years in the whole in the Windward Islands ; in Jamaica saw but three Negroes punished with whipping, not severely. Has seen punishments more severe inflicted on the Soldiers and Sailors. As to articles of food, lodging, and clothes, he agrees with the former evidence."

“ Admiral ARBUTHNOT has been frequently in the West Indies, and confirms every thing said by the former witnesses as to food, clothes, lodging, and punishment of the Negroe, particularly the latter, being less severe than that of Soldiers and Sailors.”

“ Admiral EDWARDS gives exactly the same testimony.”

“ Captain ROBERT LAMBERT has been seven or eight years in the West Indies, at different times, the last time as a Commissioner of the Navy; and agrees in his evidence with the before-mentioned gentlemen.”

“ Commodore ALLEN GARDENER, one of the Lords of the Admiralty, the last Officer of the Navy who commanded in chief at Jamaica, gives the same Account, and all the before named gentlemen, who are the most competent judges, as they are almost always on shore in time of peace, riding about the country, and visiting the principal inhabitants, declare,”

“ They do not conceive White Men can do the work of a Plantation in the West Indies.

“ That the Abolition of the Slave Trade by Great Britain would throw it into the hands of Foreigners.

“ That the present stock of Negroes cannot be kept up without fresh Importation.—And,

“ That the West India Trade is one of the great supports of the British Navy; and that the Abolition of the Slave Trade will no doubt injure that of the West Indies, and lessen the numbers of the Ships and Seamen.”

In addition to the Evidence of the Admirals, the same testimony, as to the good treatment and the happiness of the Negroes, may be added that of

Lord MACARTNEY, Governor of Grenada.

Lord DUMORE, Governor of the Bahama Islands,

Sir RALPH PAYNE, K. B. Governor of Antigua.

Sir THOMAS SHIRLEY, Governor of the same Island.

Sir JOHN DALLING, Bart. Governor of Jamaica.

Sir ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL, } Governors of the same
General CLARKE, } Island.

Sir JOHN ORDE, Governor of Dominica.

Governor SETON, of St. Vincent's.

Governor PARRY, of Barbadoes.

To these are to be added the testimonies of the Legislative Bodies of all the Islands in the West Indies; who have all returned such Answers, in writing, to the Questions put to them by the King's Ministers, as corroborate and exactly agree with the before-mentioned accounts. And in answer particularly to the following Question put to them, viz.

“ Does the Quantity of Labour, which it is necessary to
“ require from the Negroes, vary materially, in differ-
“ ent parts of the Year, as it does here in Harvest
“ Time?”

The Governors and Members of the Legislatures of Jamaica, Barbadoes, Antigua, Montserrat, Nevis, Grenada, Dominica, St. Vincent's, and St. Christopher's, universally declare, That although the hardest labour is in the time of making Sugar, they are universally more cheerful, healthy, and happy, than at any other time, from the salutary effects of the Cane Juice; as they eat as many of the Canes as they please, and drink great quantities of the Juice when it is boiled.

On examining and weighing the whole of the Evidence, the Motion of Mr. WILBERFORCE was rejected by a very great majority of the House of Commons. Yet the Gentlemen who brought forward the Question refuse to abide by the Decision of the Representatives of the People; but have

pursued the most unwarrantable means to procure Petitions to the House, to abolish a Trade they are taught to believe unjust and cruel, from declarations of people of the lowest class, sought for in Brothels, Jails, and Tippling-houses—Smugglers—Runaway Sailors—Discarded Overseers and Servants—and other people of low character, many of whom would not be worthy of credit even upon oath. The people who call themselves Abolitionists have extracted, from the accounts given by these men, what they call a Summary of the Evidence on this Question—leaving out the testimony of all those of the Gentlemen before mentioned—and have thereby deceived and imposed upon the People in the Country. Yet these men boast of humanity—though they are guilty of crimes equal to perjury, for the purpose of injuring the fortune and reputation of men who, in carrying on their Plantations, employ thousands of the Husbandmen, Farmers, and Manufacturers of this Country:—for is not a man as guilty, who suppresses truth for the purpose of gaining his cause, as he who swears falsely ?

No man can examine with candour and impartiality the History of Africa, and the whole of the Evidence laid before the House upon this business, but must be satisfied—

1st, That if Great Britain was to refuse to permit the Trade to Africa for Negro Labourers, other Nations would carry it on.

2^{dly}, That without new supplies of Negroes from Africa the Plantations in the West Indies would be ruined.

3^{dly}, That if all the European Nations were to join in prohibiting that Traffic, the Negroes which are at too great a distance from Barbary to be purchased by those people to be made Eunuchs of, would return to their old practice of sacrificing them by thousands, as they used to do formerly.

4thly, That Wars are not made for the purpose of procuring Slaves, nor are Negroes kidnapped; but, on the contrary, Wars are not only less sanguinary than heretofore, but less frequent, because they put a stop to Trade.

5thly, That every possible care is taken of them in the transportation from Africa to the West Indies; and that they are less crowded in the Ships than voluntary Emigrants from Scotland and Ireland, or Soldiers in Transports.

6thly, That they are most attentively and kindly treated by their Masters in the West Indies; that they are happy and contented; are better fed, clothed, and lodged, than the Peasants in most parts of Europe. That their Labour is much less severe; that they have no care on account of their Children—which are provided for by their Masters in their infancy, as they themselves are in their sickness or old age.

The nature of the Trade for Negroes, their kind Treatment, and happy Situation, being thus ascertained by such incontrovertible evidence; the absurdity of calling by the name of Slaves people who are no more so than Parish Apprentices in England, except as to Duration—and in point of Duration not more so than the Common People in Russia, Poland, and many other parts of Europe—is apparent. How absurd and hypocritical must be the pretences of people, who say we have no right to purchase Sugar, because it is criminal in the Planter to make it by the labour of Slaves, when they make no objection to buy the Hemp, Flax, and Deals of Russia—the Cotton, the Mahogany, Cochineal, Indigo, and other Dyeing Materials, and the Gold and Silver of the West Indies—which are all procured by the same means!





